Varney, Megrow provided training

Jim Vail earns MMR #207

I have vague memories of building Strombecker kits earlier, but I became an active scale model railroader after WWII.

I "trained" on Varney, Megow, Roundhouse and Walthers HO kits, and Baker couplers. Later, I "graduated" to Pennline, Mainline, Silver Streak and Ulrich.

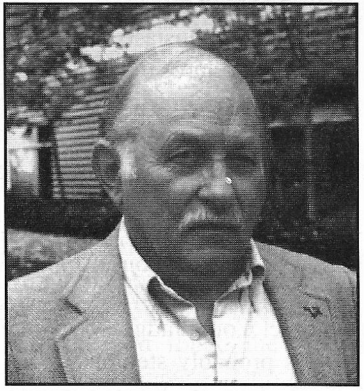
During this period I was fortunate enough to know, and regularly visit, the great John Allen. Under his guidance I began weathering and scratchbuilding.

Around 1962 I "sold out" and built for some years in On3 — then built a 1-1/8":1' live steam, outside frame, narrow gauge, 2-8-0.

All that is behind me now and since about 1975 I have built in HOn3 — with a little HO standard gauge. I operated on John Allen's G&D from time to time, was a member of the Golden Gate Model Railroad, the West Valley Live Steamers, and president of the Golden Gate Live Steamers.

I presently belong to the Pacific Coast Region and a small local "round-robin" group.

I also write a column in *The Narrow Gauge and Short Line Gazette* and have had articles in the *Railroad Model Craftsman.* For the past six years I have been building my fifth HO/HOn3 layout, which at this time occupies the majority of my spare time. I'm also getting more interested in collecting and building some of those old nostalgia kits that I sold so many years ago.



Outside of model railroading I: was a locomotive engineer at Roaring Camp; was a tank mechanic in the Army; am now a mechanical engineer with IBM Research; regularly drive my '41 Chevy street rod; collect and restore old clocks and watches; at one time, designed and did the electrical wiring — and most of the "dummy work" — on my own home and shop.

I am now a bachelor but I have a grown daughter.

My layout is open for most of the local NMRA functions but I'm happy to show it at most any other time if I have some advance notice.•